

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 29, 2022

The Honorable Matthew Cartwright  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairs Cartwright and Pingree and Ranking Members Aderholt and Joyce:

As you begin the process of crafting the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) appropriation bills to fund the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), we strongly urge you to support increased funding for endangered species conservation, including Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing, planning and consultation, species conservation and restoration, and species recovery. Thousands of animal and plant species depend on the Endangered Species Act for survival, yet it has been systematically and severely underfunded for decades. We thank you for the modest increase provided in the final FY 2022 bill, yet significantly more funding is critical to recover and conserve our Nation's most imperiled species.

The world is in the midst of a staggering and unprecedented biodiversity crisis. Once common wildlife and plant populations are crashing around the world, and scientists warn that one million animal and plant species are heading towards extinction, many in the next few decades, due to habitat loss, climate change, wildlife exploitation and other human activities. Insects and other important pollinators are rapidly declining. Hundreds of butterfly species across the American West are vanishing as the region becomes hotter and drier. The eastern monarch butterfly population, which once numbered over a billion, has declined by 85% in just two decades, while the western population of the monarch butterfly has crashed by 95%. In North America alone, scientists estimate that bird populations have declined by 30 percent in the past 50 years, and globally nearly one-third of freshwater fish are threatened with extinction.

Importantly, the resilience and health of wildlife and ecosystems are directly related to human health and well-being. As one example, half a trillion dollars of crops per year are at risk from pollinator loss. Ecosystem services from fisheries to water filtration and more are all at grave risk from the damage to natural systems. Moreover, the World Economic Forum Global Risk report for 2022 identifies biodiversity loss as the third most severe risk to the global economy over the next ten years. The loss and over-exploitation of nature are also at the root of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic and other zoonotic diseases, which result from the spillover of zoonotic pathogens from wildlife to humans including SARS,

Ebola, and HIV. Such spillover events are increasing in frequency, driven by deforestation and land degradation, and wildlife trade.

Fortunately, the U.S. Endangered Species Act is one of the strongest tools we have to combat the current wildlife extinction crisis. In enacting the Endangered Species Act of 1973, Congress recognized that imperiled species of wildlife, fish and plants “are of esthetic, ecological, educational, historical, recreational, and scientific value to the Nation and its people.” Congress gave the FWS and NMFS a powerful set of tools to carry out the law’s goal of conserving endangered species.

Nonetheless, implementing recovery strategies and partner activities in an effective manner requires both a significant commitment and sufficient resources. Strong funding for Ecological Services supports FWS’s work with partners at the state and local level both to recover listed species and protect their habitats. Similarly, funding for NMFS Protected Resources Science and Management program is crucial for the protection and recovery of imperiled marine species.

The need for increased funding is evident from the over 400 threatened and endangered species that lack recovery plans, as well as the hundreds of species that receive zero dollars in recovery funding from any agency – federal or state. Congressional appropriations for recovery and consultation have simply not kept pace with the number of listed species or the complex challenges of conservation in a world facing the accelerating threats of climate change and habitat loss. Inadequate funding not only puts at risk the recovery of threatened and endangered species and conservation of their habitats; it also impedes FWS and NMFS’s ability to apply the best scientific knowledge available in a timely review of listing decisions for species in need of protection.

Unfortunately, animals and plants continue to go extinct in the United States while waiting for the Act’s protections. Creating an artificial bottleneck in the listing process—a process that is based solely on the best available science by law—is poor policy. Likewise, underfunding Candidate Conservation in the Conservation and Restoration line-item and the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund undermines the strong partnerships that the FWS is working to build. If Congress does not provide the funding increases necessary for FWS and NMFS to carry out their statutory obligations, endangered species could continue to move closer to extinction. More importantly, our nation could lose even more of our precious wildlife heritage.

For FY23, we request the following funding increases for FWS endangered species conservation:

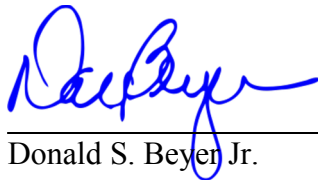
- \$46.7 million for recovery
- \$13.1 million for planning and consultation
- \$17.7 million for ESA listing
- \$1.3 million for Candidate Conservation
- \$24.3 million for the Cooperative Endangered Species Fund

Finally, in the last few years we have seen a number of imperiled marine species reach crisis status. There are now only about 336 North Atlantic right whales remaining, a population decline of eight percent since 2019. Scientists now predict the species could be functionally extinct by 2040 if current trends continue. The Southern Resident killer whale population is at its lowest levels in 20 years. Vaquitas—the smallest and most endangered marine mammal on Earth—have plummeted by 90% in recent years, and scientists estimate that there are likely only 10 vaquitas left in the world. Their extinction is virtually assured without bold, immediate action. Each of these tragic declines underscore the dangers of being complacent

and not providing robust funding to NMFS. Thus, we recommend a \$30 million increase in funding to the agency's protected resources budget to ensure that none of our amazing marine species slip irrevocably towards extinction.

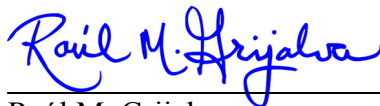
All of this funding is critical to save more species from extinction and put America's imperiled animals and plants on the path to recovery. We look forward to working with the Subcommittee to ensure that these programs are adequately funded in FY23.

Sincerely,



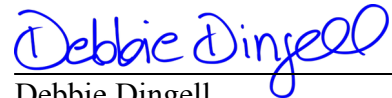
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress  
Chair, Committee on Natural  
Resources



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



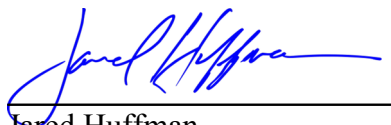
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Gerald E. Connolly  
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Gregorio Kilili Camacho  
Sablan  
Member of Congress



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Jared Huffman  
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Peter A. DeFazio  
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MARK TAKANO  
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Mary Gay Scanlon  
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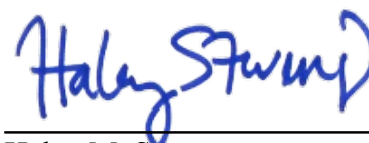
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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



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Antonio Delgado  
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Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



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Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress  
, Communications and  
Technology



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John Yarmuth  
Member of Congress



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James R. Langevin  
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Joyce Beatty  
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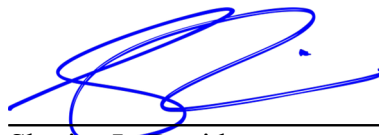
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James P. McGovern  
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Jerry McNerney  
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Sharice L. Davids  
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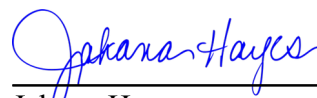
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Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress



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Mark DeSaulnier  
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Jahana Hayes  
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Peter Welch  
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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



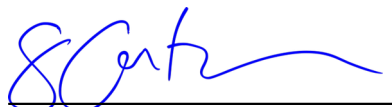
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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Susan Wild  
Member of Congress



Sean Casten  
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Tom Malinowski  
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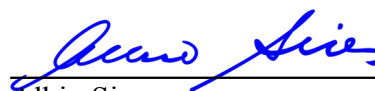
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Albio Sires  
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Earl Blumenauer  
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Bill Foster  
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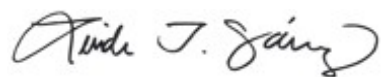
Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse  
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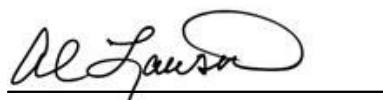
David Scott  
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Linda T. Sánchez  
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Rick Larsen  
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Al Lawson  
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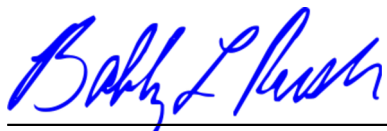
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna  
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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress



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Paul D. Tonko  
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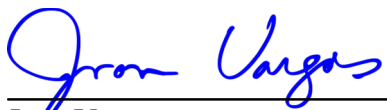
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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



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Joseph D. Morelle  
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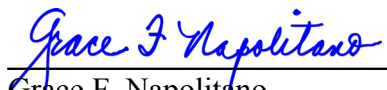
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Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



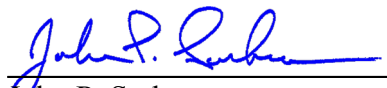
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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



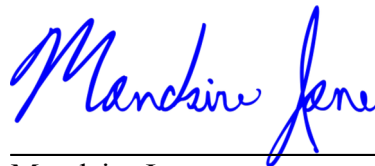
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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



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John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress



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Mondaire Jones  
Member of Congress





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Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



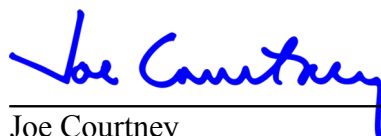
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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



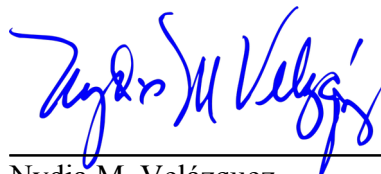
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Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



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Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



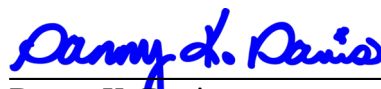
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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



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Rashida Tlaib  
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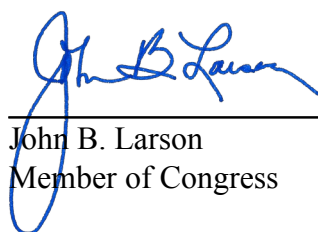
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Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



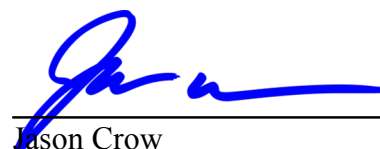
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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



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John B. Larson  
Member of Congress




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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress



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Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



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Karen Bass  
Member of Congress



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Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress



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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



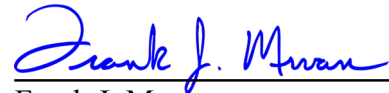
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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Frank J. Mrvan  
Member of Congress



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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



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Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress



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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
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Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress



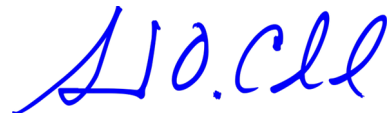
Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



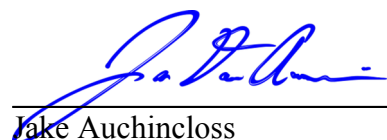
Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress




Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



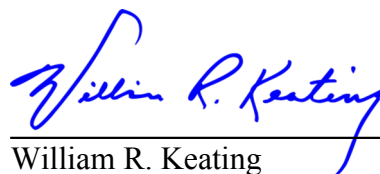
Terri A. Sewell  
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Jake Auchincloss  
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Jerrold Nadler  
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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress



John Katko  
Member of Congress



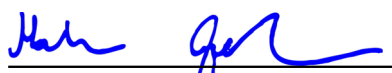
Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress



Marie Newman  
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress



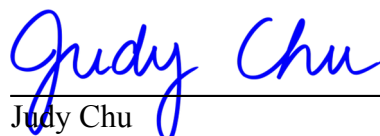
Hakeem Jeffries  
Member of Congress



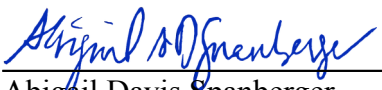
Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



Abigail Davis Spanberger  
Member of Congress



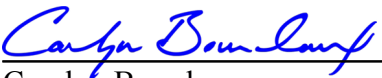
Andy Kim  
Member of Congress



Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



Carolyn Bourdeaux  
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress